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ABSTRACT

This book is concerned with potentially dramatic changes in the public library. It views the library's historical pattern of reactionary, evolutionary change as no longer viable, but in need of being replaced by planned, proactive, and innovative change. The central thesis of the book is that the necessary transformation of the public library from an institution designed to serve the needs of an earlier age may best be facilitated through the development of more effective systems for the creation, transfer, and utilization of managerial information and innovation among public librarians. The first chapter provides a broad overview of the twin themes that run throughout the book: organizational change and innovation in general, and the patterns that have traditionally characterized change in public libraries. Chapter 2 identifies several classical models of the innovation diffusion process found in the literature on organizational change and innovation. Major events and trends that shaped the public library field through the early 1960s are examined in chapter 3. Developments during the decade or so between 1966 and 1979 are viewed as creating an environment conducive to a potentially radical change in direction for public libraries. These developments are outlined in chapter four. The events surrounding the development and diffusion of the Public Library Association's (PLA) planning and measurement techniques are treated in detail in chapters 5 through 8. Chapter 9 compares the development, diffusion, and adoption of Public Library Association's innovation with the traditional models previously identified. The pattern of how the process is currently working in the field of public librarianship is used in the final chapter to suggest an improved mechanism for facilitating public library change. (Contains 102 references.) (MAS)

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